

Message Text

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TAGS: CSCE, FI

SUBJECT: COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE OF FINNISH DELEGATION
AT BELGRADE CSCE MEETING

REF: HELSINKI 845

1. AS IT DID AT GENEVA PHASE OF CSCE 1973-1975, FINNISH
DELEGATION WORKED HARD AT BELGRADE TO FACILITATE
NEGOTIATIONS AND TO MAINTAIN CONSTRUCTIVE CONFERENCE
ATMOSPHERE. FINNS DEMONSTRATED EARLY THAT THEY
CONTINUED TO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO CSCE BY
SELECTING RELATIVELY LARGE (APPROXIMATELY HALF-DOZEN)
DELEGATION OF CSCE VETERANS WHO WERE ASSIGNED ON PERMANENT
BASIS TO BELGRADE FROM JUNE 1977 UNTIL CONCLUSION OF
CONFERENCE. THROUGHOUT CONFERENCE THEY SOUGHT TO PROJECT
TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF A NEUTRAL COUNTRY, FIRMLY IN WESTERN
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CAMP AS FAR AS BASIC VALUES BUT READY TO LEND A HAND TO
ASSIST SOVIETS OVER ROUGH PATCHES.

2. RELATIONS BETWEEN FINNISH DELEGATION AND USDEL AND
OTHER WESTERN DELEGATIONS WERE EXCELLENT. AS THEY DID AT
GENEVA, FINNS WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO CREATE A CLIMATE
OF SOCIAL CAMARADERIE THAT CUT ACROSS IDEOLOGICAL LINES.

FINNS SOUGHT TO PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN NEUTRAL/NON-ALIGNED CAUCUS AND ALSO PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN DAILY NORDIC CAUCUS. ALLIED AND OTHER NEUTRAL/NON-ALIGNED DELS GENERALLY FELT THAT INFORMATION THAT CAME OUT OF THOSE CAUCUSES WOULD GET BACK TO SOVIETS FAIRLY QUICKLY BY A FINNISH CONNECTION. PERHAPS BECAUSE SOVIETS NEVER INDICATED REAL WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY AT BELGRADE, HOWEVER, THIS CONNECTION SEEMED MOSTLY TO WORK ONE WAY. FINNS PROFESSED TO HAVE NO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF SOVIET INTENTIONS AND RARELY IF AT ALL APPEARED TO BE SERVING AS A SOVIET STALKING HORSE.

3. DURING REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION PHASE WHICH TOOK UP ALMOST ALL OF CONFERENCE'S TIME UNTIL CHRISTMAS RECESS, FINNS ADOPTED A QUIET, MODERATE LINE. THEY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY AGREED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS AND BASKET THREE HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION WERE IMPORTANT PARTS OF FINAL ACT AND THAT THERE WERE IMPLEMENTATION DEFICIENCIES, BUT THEY KEPT THEIR COMMENTS MORE GENERAL THAN OTHER MAJOR NEUTRALS AND AVOIDED IN PARTICULAR ANY HINT OF DIRECT CRITICISM OF SOVIETS. THEY WORKED HARD ON LESS CONTROVERSIAL BASKET TWO SUBJECTS, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENT, WHERE THEIR POSITION CORRESPONDED CLOSELY TO THAT OF SOVIETS BUT ALSO TO THAT OF OTHER NORDICS. DURING JANUARY-MARCH WHEN CONFERENCE WAS ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO

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DRAFT CONCLUDING DOCUMENT, FINNS GENERALLY PLAYED UNCHARACTERISTICALLY QUIET ROLE. THEY HELD UP AGREEMENT IN CAUCUS FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO WHAT BECAME MAJOR NEUTRAL/NON-ALIGNED COMPROMISE PROPOSAL OF FEBRUARY 1 FOR A SUBSTANTIVE DOCUMENT. THIS WAS ATTRIBUTED BY SOME OBSERVERS TO FINNISH PERCEPTION THAT SOVIETS WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY.

4. IN FINAL DAYS OF CONFERENCE, FINNS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED RELUCTANCE TO BECOME TOO DEEPLY ENGAGED IN WHAT PROVED TO BE FRUITLESS LAST-DITCH EFFORTS OF SOME NEUTRAL/ NON-ALIGNED AND ROMANIANS TO PRODUCE SOME DEGREE OF SUBSTANCE IN CONCLUDING DOCUMENT. FINNS SAID THEY WERE STILL HOPING TO PLAY HONEST BROKER'S ROLE IF RIGHT MOMENT CAME. IN THIS CASE THEIR RELUCTANCE WAS APPRECIATED BY WEST WHICH WISHED TO AVOID BEING PUT UNDER PRESSURE FOR A SELECTIVELY SUBSTANTIVE DOCUMENT THAT HAD NO MENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OR MAJOR BASKET THREE SUBJECTS. FINAL FINNISH STATEMENT IN OPEN PLENARY, LIKE INITIAL STATEMENT IN OCTOBER, WAS CAREFULLY CRAFTED AND GENERALLY BLAND. SOME OBSERVERS WERE STRUCK, HOWEVER, BY FACT THAT IT

CITED APPROVINGLY A COMMENT OF KOSYGIN WITHOUT
BALANCING REFERENCE TO CSCE COMMENTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER
OR OTHER WESTERN LEADERS.

5. IN SUMMARY, FINNS SHOWED THEY CONTINUE TO VIEW CSCE
AS A PROCESS WHICH CAN OVER TIME PRODUCE MAJOR CHANGE IN
POST-WAR PATTERNS OF EUROPEAN CONFRONTATION AND COOPERA-
TION AND OFFER SMALLER NATIONS MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER
BETWEEN MAJOR POWER BLOCS. THEY WERE CLEARLY UNEASY
WHEN SHARP DISAGREEMENTS AROSE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST,
PARTICULARLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THEIR SOMEWHAT MORE
SUBDUED ROLE AT BELGRADE THAN AT GENEVA CAN PROBABLY BE
ATTRIBUTED TO FACT THAT FORMER NEVER BECAME A REAL
NEGOTIATION. NONETHELESS, USDEL HAD IMPRESSION THAT
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FINNS WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN
CSCE OVER NEXT FEW YEARS, PROBABLY WITH EMPHASIS ON
KEEPING UP MOMENTUM THROUGH "POSITIVE" STEPS AT EXPERTS
MEETINGS SCHEDULED BETWEEN NOW AND 1980 MADRID MEETING AND
MINIMUM ATTENTION TO MORE CONFRONTATIONAL ASPECTS OF
IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW OF FINAL ACT COMMITMENTS.

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